

# PLAIN TALKS

December  
1980

# MAIL BOX

## THE COVER

The Christmas ornaments on the cover were caught by the camera during a recent visit to what looks like a child's idea of Paradise — Zachry's Christmas Place on North Street in Beaumont.

Different sizes, shapes and colors of trees, ornaments and wreaths fill the little shop from front to back. Dorothy Hamilton, proprietor, says the business is open only from October through December. But while others are enjoying picnicking, water-skiing and other warm-weather activities, she reveals that she spends her summers designing Christmas trees!

The store is owned by the Zachrys, a Marshall, Texas, family that owns several such shops throughout the United states.

Ken Haynie of the Public Affairs Department in Beaumont shot the picture.

Mr. W. Donham Crawford  
Gulf States Utilities  
Beaumont, Texas

Dear Mr. Crawford:

On this past Saturday I had the opportunity to be at a function in Lake Charles with Mr. Jim Richardson to discuss with a number of my constituents the increased cost reflected in their utility bills. Jim, as usual, did a fine job of trying to explain some of the facts to everyone there.

After the meeting I asked Jim if he would arrange for me to see the construction at the new Nelson facility near Lake Charles, which he did. I was accompanied by Mr. Joe Cox and Jim, who did a fine job of explaining GSU's latest expansion project. I was very pleased to have an opportunity to view it first hand as it certainly gives me a better understanding of what is being done to meet our increased energy needs.

My thanks to you for the services of your company and your employees.  
Kindest regards,

Sincerely,  
John Breaux  
Member of Congress

William E. Richard  
Gulf States Utilities  
Lake Charles, La.

Dear Bill:

Thanks very much for the excellent preplanning and hospitality for the River Bend plant tour. It was superb.

I believe everyone thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated it.

Most employers see to it that their former employees receive their pension checks, but Gulf States goes far beyond that, for which I am grateful.

Sincerely,  
Robert Guidry

William E. Richard  
Gulf States Utilities  
Beaumont, Texas

Dear Bill:

Speaking for the Sideliners, we thank you for the excellent and informative tour of the River Bend facility, also for the fine meal and the hospitality you, Jo Ann (Burnett) and Dennis (Singletary) provided on the trip. We enjoyed it very much.

Again, we thank you for your continued support. It is appreciated.

Sincerely,  
Walter House

## PLAIN TALKS

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Employees who change residences or offices should fill out company mailing-address-change forms (GSU0012-00-79) and return them to the mailroom in the Wilson Building. GSU publications, departmental mailings and other company information are not automatically forwarded; addresses must be corrected when employees move.

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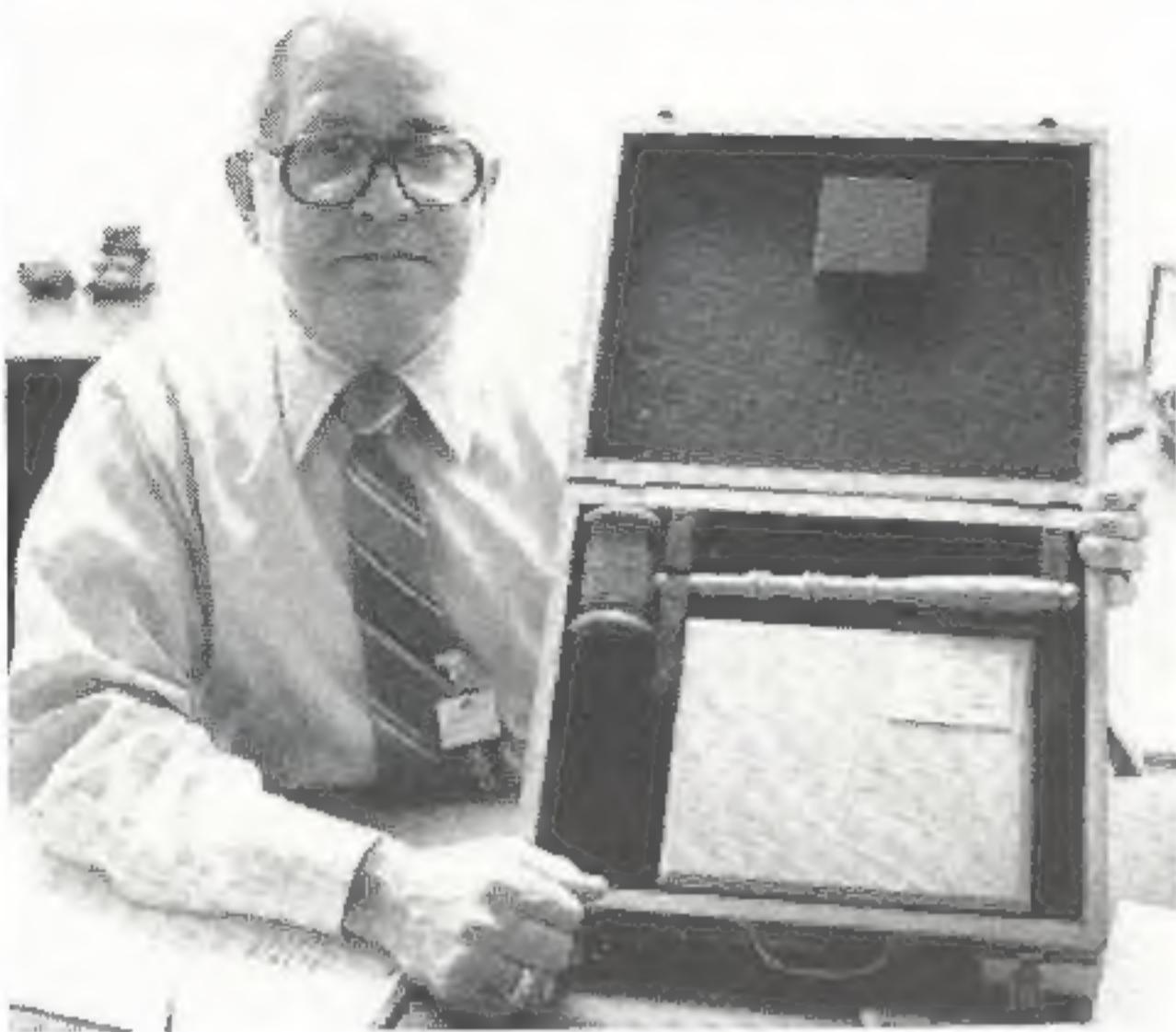
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# NEWS BRIEFS

## Summers chairs SEE committee



GSU's Bob Summers, system claims director, was elected chairman of the Legal and Claims Committee of the Southeastern Electric Exchange during the SEE's annual meeting in Asheville, N.C. in mid-October.

SEE is a non-profit, non-political organization representing investor-owned electric utilities in 13 southeastern states and the District of Columbia. The organization encourages greater cooperation among member companies and works to further the interests of investor-owned utilities.

The Legal and Claims Committee is composed of in-house legal counsel and claims personnel involved with potential and active claims and litigation against member companies. Activities include personnel training, department organization and development of investigative and settlement procedures.

A 31-year GSU veteran, Summers joined the company in the transmission and distribution department. He was promoted to claims representative in 1973 and became system claims director in 1976.

Summers, a native of Franklin, Ind., attended Franklin College upon his discharge from the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1946.

He is married to the former Olga Wengrew of Cleveland, Ohio. The couple has two daughters, Linda and Connie.

## LUSI seeking more members

A membership drive has been launched by a two-year-old organization that represents the interests of utility shareholders before the Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC), the state legislature and other governmental bodies.

Louisiana Utility Shareholders Inc. (LUSI), a 1,000-member band of electric, gas and telephone utility stockholders, recently retained a New Orleans public relations firm to conduct the drive.

The potential impact of the group is great. Six different utilities serving the state — Central Louisiana Energy Corp., SWEPCO, GSU, Middle South Utilities, South Central Bell and Louisiana Gas Service — have a combined total of 44,008 shareholders in the state. Membership is not limited to Louisiana residents, however.

The membership fee is \$10 per person annually — money that LUSI members say could help finance intervention on behalf of utility shareholders.

President and treasurer of LUSI is John O. Roy Jr., manager of E. F. Hutton in New Orleans.

Although LUSI was formed in 1978, the relatively low membership prevented the group from raising enough money to effectively represent Louisiana utility shareholders. Besides the membership drive, another attempt by LUSI to revitalize the organization was to move the group's headquarters from Alexandria in Central Louisiana to Baton Rouge, the capital city.

## Two cited for lifesaving efforts

A Conroe man and a Beaumont woman were recently cited for their lifesaving efforts.

The two employees — Richie D. Wright and Pearl Leigh — each received a President's Lifesaving Award.



GSU President Norman Lee presented Wright's plaque during a Sept. 19 ceremony in commemoration of the lifesaving action taken by the employee when his 18-month-old son was choking on food.

Wright performed the Heimlich maneuver to expel the food lodged in the youngster's throat.



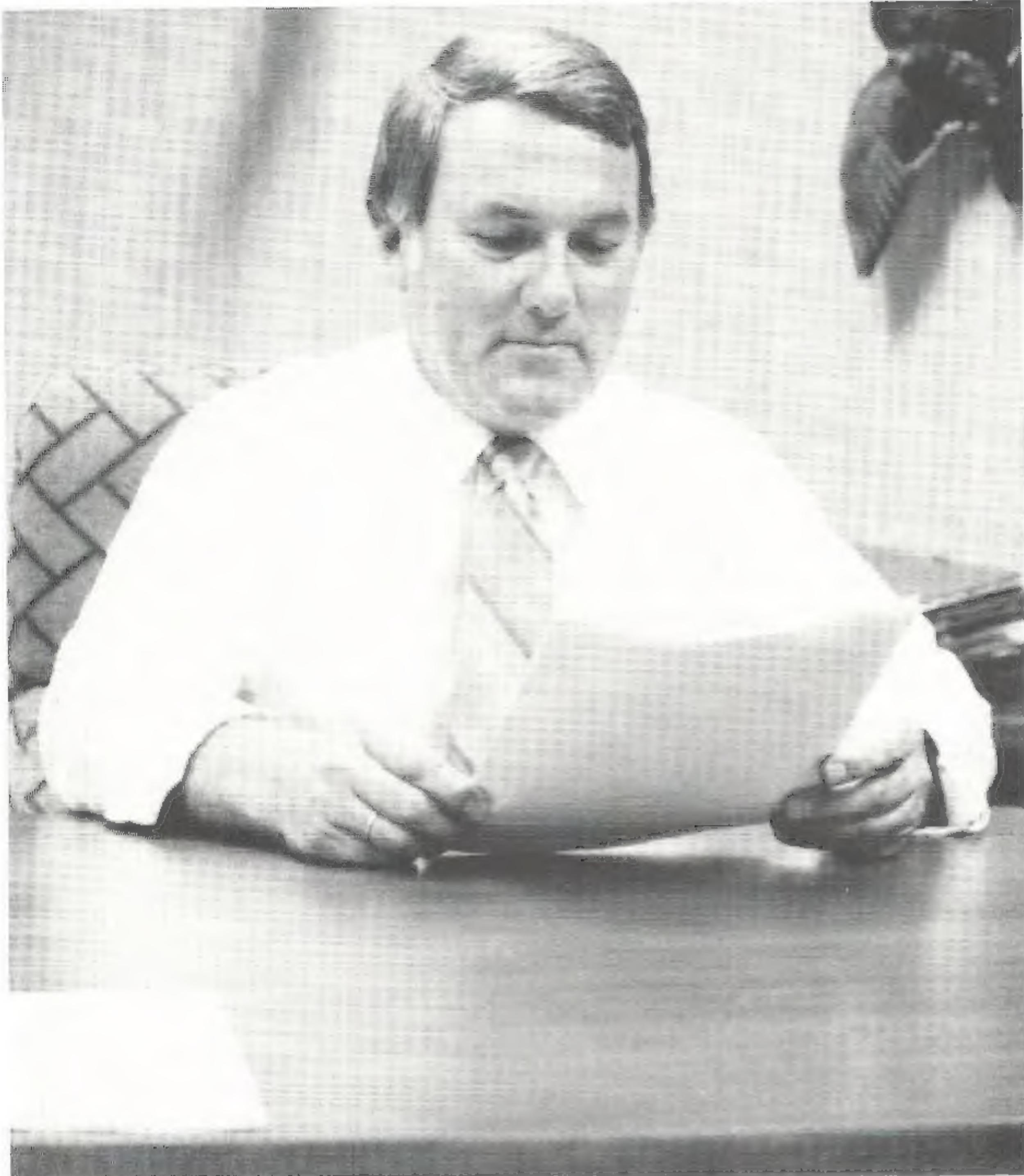
Mrs. Leigh received her plaque during a Nov. 3 ceremony. She earned the honor for her rescue of a young woman who began choking while attending the recent Winnie Rice Festival. She also applied the Heimlich maneuver.

Both recipients credited GSU first-aid classes for their ability to perform the maneuver.

In the pictures, each recipient is shown with Lee. Mrs. Leigh is also shown with her husband, Joe.

# Q&A

# Richard discusses coal information program



**Editor's Note:** In just a little more than a year, Gulf States' first coal-fired generating unit will be on line. Unit 6, the 540 megawatt facility now under construction at Nelson Station in Westlake, La., is scheduled for completion in the spring of 1982. But coal-fired generation is a mystery in this part of the country, reveals Lake Charles Division Vice President William E. Richard. The executive has appointed a group of five division employees who have begun informing their co-workers about coal and how the new plant will affect Gulf States and the company's customers. Later, the division will take their information program to the public.

**PT: What inspired you to appoint an "education committee" on coal?**

Richard: Although I always realized we would need to inform employees about coal generation, two events triggered immediate action. First, a neighboring utility, Beauregard Electric Co-operative, Inc., of DeRidder, encountered some pretty serious customer misunderstanding about how coal generation affected their electric bills. Unfortunately, Beauregard, which belongs to the Cajun Electric Power Co-operative, Inc., incurred some high fuel costs at almost the same time that Cajun began operation of its new coal plant near New Roads.

Beauregard customers blamed their higher bills on coal generation, which was not the case at all. Then the results of the employee attitude survey conducted by Economic and Industrial Research, Inc. (EIRI) earlier this year really startled us in October. It seems GSU employees have a higher acceptance of nuclear generating plants than coal plants.

**PT: Who makes up the committee?**

Richard: Three CONTACT leaders — Ed Brawner of Lake Charles, Mel Clark of Lafayette and Jean Hebert of Nelson Station — as well as Jerry East, district service representative in Jennings, and Jane Dufrene, consumer service representative of Lake Charles. The information meetings are being conducted in a similar format as that followed in the CONTACT program, except that the sessions are for both bargaining unit and management employees. The CONTACT leaders have had the training that makes them effective communicators and the CONTACT program is well accepted among employees. We think their involvement practically ensures the success of our program.

# Richard on coal

**PT:** Could you give a brief introduction to the Nelson coal plant, perhaps describing the immensity of the operation and some of its unusual features?

**Richard:** The unit will consume over 300 tons of coal an hour under full load. A 110-car train will arrive at Nelson Station every other day from Wyoming. Each car will carry 100 tons of Western sub-bituminous coal — coal that currently costs about \$8 a ton at the mine, although Wyoming's 17 percent severance tax and transportation costs drive the price to about \$30 per ton. GSU has a contract with Kerr-McGee for 50 million tons of Western coal to be provided over a 20-year period. The most unusual feature of the railroad loop that will surround the storage yard at Nelson Station is the dumping site, where each car will be moved to a rotary dumper that will rotate the car to spill the coal and then return it to its original position. The maneuver will only take two minutes per car.

**PT: Why must GSU and other electric companies burn more coal?**

**Richard:** In 1973, the Arab oil embargo brought intense public and governmental awareness of the nation's dependence on oil. As the first noticeable increase in fuel prices occurred, the nation was pressed to become independent of foreign oil cartels. As oil continues to become more costly and its foreign sources less dependable, we must reduce our reliance on imported oil and increase our use of coal, a plentiful native resource whose value as a fuel for electric power generation has been proven over the years. Nationwide, coal as a fuel has produced approximately 45 percent of the electric power generated since World War II.

**PT: Does the Fuel Use Act have anything to do with increased reliance on coal?**

**Richard:** Yes. The Fuel Use Act is a part of the National Energy Bill passed by Congress in November, 1978. Its primary objectives are to prohibit or minimize petroleum and natural gas consumption and, where petroleum or natural gas must be used, to make certain both are used effectively. In part, the act prohibits the use of petroleum or natural gas in new power plants and prohibits the use of natural gas in existing power plants after Jan. 1, 1990.

**PT: Will there be enough coal to make up the difference?**

**Richard:** Coal is not the only answer to our energy dilemma. A good balance of fuel that includes coal and nuclear is the best answer. However, the U.S. has plenty of coal for our needs for some time to come since our nation has about one-third of the world's supply. More than 3 trillion tons of coal lie buried beneath the U.S. About 434 billion tons of this coal can be mined economically by methods now in use. In 1979, American mines produced 700 million tons of coal.

**PT: Earlier, you said that GSU will be burning coal that will cost around \$30 a ton, counting taxes and transportation costs. How does coal compare in cost to other fossil fuels?**

**Richard:** Even with the added taxes and rail costs, coal will cost less than oil and gas under current and projected costs of the fuels. By 1989, it is estimated that oil and gas will be about \$9 per million BTUs while coal delivered in Lake Charles will be about half this cost.



**PT: Some utilities are experimenting with coal gasification. Does GSU have any such projects?**

**Richard:** The company is engaged in two studies in coal gasification, the process by which coal is turned into a gas. The sulfur and trace elements are also removed, producing a synthetic gas that is similar to natural gas. Concurrently, the company will be building two 90 megawatt gas turbines that will be able to burn such synthetic gas and which will be used only for peaking purposes. In one project with Combustion Engineering, GSU is a subcontractor for a coal gasification project that will utilize high sulfur Eastern coal which will be gasified to provide a low BTU synthetic gas to displace natural gas and fuel oil now being used in Nelson 3. A project with Westinghouse utilizes Western coal to provide a medium BTU synthetic gas to fuel the 90 megawatt units.

**PT: What is Gulf States doing to protect the environment?**

**Richard:** That's a whole story in itself. The company is making an immense investment in pollution control devices for the coal plant. The plant will utilize covered conveyors, precipitators and levees, to mention a few items, that will help reduce the amount of pollution. Our coal education program for employees will continue in mid-1981 with a more complete look at environmental efforts.

# Port Arthur employee opens home to foster children

by Susan Gilley  
Plain Talks Editor

The Rod Tompkins' residence has been "home" to more than 20 children over the past five years.

Only three of the youngsters were born to Rod and Marion Tompkins, while the Port Acres, Texas, couple has served as foster parents to at least 18 others.

What would prompt a young Gulf Stater and his wife to take on all the additional responsibility?

Tompkins explains, "We really wanted more kids of our own, but we just couldn't afford it."

A 15-year GSU veteran, Tompkins' role of foster parent is perhaps doubly impressive considering an accident several years ago while he was in the Line Department led to the loss of one of his arms and some fingers on his remaining arm.

But Tompkins exhibits no bitterness over the mishap.

The Port Arthur Division substation operator concedes that the couple's role as foster parents is "most rewarding. We feel like we're really helping the kids and we know that we're making an impression on them."

Because of their youth — Rod's 34 and Marion's 35 — Tompkins feels that their home environment is probably less strict than that of most foster homes.

"We're kind of liberal," Tompkins admits, adding, "For example, one little boy was dismissed from a previous foster home for dipping Skoal. We don't enforce such rules because we know that if a 12-year-old wants to dip snuff, he's going to find a way to do it. Instead, we made him follow certain guidelines — no dipping at home or in our presence, for instance."

Presently, the Tompkinses are serving as foster parents to 12-year-old Gerald and 15-year-old Kim. The family already considers Kim "one of ours."

The young teen has made her home with the family for the past year, following a brief period with her father. Before that, she and her sister had spent another year with the Tompkinses.

If state welfare officials were to attempt to place Kim with another home, the family would adopt her, Tompkins says.

Tompkins says that his three children — Lori, 13, Daren, 11, and Dustin, 2 — are "generally not much problem."

But he admits that "sometimes there's jealousy and sometimes there's kids they just can't get along with."

Even so, he continues, "Whenever a kid leaves, they always are eager to know when the next ones are going to come."

The Tompkinses became interested in serving as foster parents about five years ago through a television show dealing with the topic. They inquired about it, a caseworker visited their home and they've been foster parents ever since.

"We started out keeping 10-year-olds and under, but soon afterwards we were sent a

teenager. A caseworker called at 1 o'clock one morning and asked us to keep a teen for one day. We ended up keeping her for a year."

Apparently, caseworkers felt the couple did "real well" with teenagers. "Teens are the hardest to place," he says.

Many of the children who stay with the Tompkinses have homes of their own, but are separated from their natural parents by what are sometimes appalling circumstances.

"But kids with problems at home don't talk about it," Tompkins reveals. "We try to learn as much as we can from the caseworker and we don't ask the child about it."

Rearing children may be the Tompkinses' main calling, but they're also busy raising rabbits, swine, pheasants, ducks and the family horse, Starr — to name just a few of the 4-H projects that keep the family busy.

The couple serves as organizational leaders for the Port Acres 4-H Club and all of the school-age children are active in the organization.



Horseback riding is a favorite for the Tompkins family. Shown with Starr are (from left) Rod, Gerald, Lori and Daren.

# Pat Murphy recalls 44 years



*Pat Murphy gestures as he recalls earlier years during his Gulf States' career.*

A couple of months before Pat Murphy's December 1 retirement from Gulf States, upon being asked to describe his biggest challenge during his 44 years with the company, Murphy replied, "Well, I'm not sure — I've still got a few weeks to go."

Asked what had been his pet peeve about the company's operations, he answered, "long memorandums between people who have offices a few yards apart from each other."

On the serious side, Murphy, a senior vice president responsible for the Production Department and a director of the company, recalled that his greatest pleasure was that "I never had to go look for work. There was always more than enough to keep me busy."

Joseph R. Murphy was born and reared in the relatively small community of Hanover, Pa. He attended school there and, upon graduation from high school, enrolled in Williamson Trade School in 1933, electing to pursue power plant operations, one of five courses offered.

He completed the course and was recruited by representatives of Stone & Webster, which at the

time sought electric utility candidates for Engineers Public Service Company, a holding company for several electric utilities in the U.S.

As Murphy recalled, three offers were made on behalf of what is now Gulf States — two for GSU's Naches Station in Beaumont and one for Louisiana Steam Generating Company (now Louisiana Station) in Baton Rouge. Murphy went to Louisiana Station in 1936 as station clerk and was there for 16 years, rising to assistant to the plant superintendent.

In 1938, Gulf States merged with Baton Rouge Electric Company and Louisiana Steam Generating, forming what is basically now the GSU system.

Murphy recalled that the merger — a momentous occasion in the company's history — was made by "whoever was in charge on the 27th of the month — I later found out it was the birthday of some executive's wife."

It was during his early years in Baton Rouge, around 1939, that Murphy met Phyllis Singletary, a member of a prominent Baton Rouge family. They were married

two years later.

The World War II years called for many long hours of work at Louisiana Station and parts and material were hard to locate. "I guess the most trying situation that happened to us at the plant was when an entire shift quit to go to another industry."

In 1952, Murphy was transferred to the Personnel Department in Baton Rouge and named personnel assistant. He progressed steadily through the departmental ranks, attaining the position of vice president-personnel manager in 1967. In 1963, he had completed the Harvard Advanced Management Program.

Murphy was in personnel work for 17 years, and became widely recognized as an astute negotiator — both by management and the union. Even after he went on to operations and production work, he remained on call as the dean of negotiators for the company.

In 1969, Murphy was promoted to vice president-Louisiana operations and two years later he was transferred to Beaumont to head up the company's division operations as senior vice president-

# with company

by Jim Turner

operations. In the interim, he was elected a director of the company.

The infamous oil embargo of 1973-74 brought to the company some of its all-time, record headaches, and it was in 1974 that Murphy took on the additional responsibility of the Production Department.

Murphy said, "In a search for the 'meanest character around' to handle this situation, I was chosen."

He continued, "The biggest problem was that during the embargo period — when companies all over the world were scratching for every barrel of oil

they could locate — we had acquired some pretty high-priced stuff, and it was scattered all over the Gulf Coast." Murphy added, "The toughest part of our job was to burn a mixture of this expensive oil and our relatively inexpensive natural gas in such a way that both the customers and our shareholders would benefit. I guess that had to be my biggest challenge that can be mentioned. I've had many others."

In 1977, Murphy shed his operating duties and devoted himself solely to production responsibilities. He returned to Baton Rouge in 1978 in the same

capacity, and will remain in the city where he has so many close ties.

Closest of those ties is his daughter, Jane Anselmo and her husband Randy and their three children, Brandi, 9, Brett, 6, and Brock 3. Another daughter, Nancy Klein, lives with her husband, Bruce, and daughter, Lisa, 8, near Indianapolis. Murphy's father, who is in his late 90s, and two brothers, Ed and Bill, reside in Hanover.

## RECIPE EXCHANGE

Edna Gautreaux was one of the many *Plain Talks* readers who said she missed the recipe columns of earlier issues of the magazine.

A fulltime homemaker married to 30-year GSUer Russel Gautreaux, she seemed the perfect choice to highlight in the first Recipe Exchange column.



She and her husband, an electrician-1st class at Louisiana Station, have three sons, Russell, 26, James, 25, and Gregg, 24.

James is single and a student at LSU, while Russell and his wife, Susan, have two daughters and make their home in Baton Rouge. Gregg and his wife, Cathy, live in Gonzales.

For the holiday season, Mrs. Gautreaux offers two recipes that can be used for parties or family gatherings.



### Shrimp Mold

one 7½-ounce can shrimp  
8-ounce package cream cheese  
one can condensed tomato soup  
1½ tablespoon unflavored gelatin  
one cup mayonnaise  
3/4 cup celery, chopped fine  
3/4 cup green onions, chopped fine  
salt and pepper to taste

— Soak gelatin in ¼ cup cold water; heat soup to boiling point, remove from stove and add gelatin. Dissolve cream of cheese thoroughly. Wait four minutes, then add chopped shrimp, onions and celery and stir. Add mayonnaise, mix well. Let stand five

minutes, mix again and pour in mold. Refrigerate.

### Apple Cake

Grease and flour a tube pan. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.  
3 eggs  
1½ cup oil  
1½ cups sugar  
2½ cups self-rising flour  
2-4 medium sized apples, peeled and chopped  
one cup shredded or flake coconut  
one cup chopped pecans or walnuts.  
— Blend eggs, oil, and sugar until creamy. Add flour a little at a time; blend well. Batter will be stiff. Fold in apples, coconut and nuts. Pour into pan and bake for one hour. Remove from pan after 30 minutes. Top the warm cake with the following:  
1/2 stick butter or margarine  
1/3 cup milk  
1/2 cup brown sugar  
— Mix butter, milk and sugar in saucepan. Boil for three minutes and pour over the warm cake.

Mrs. Gautreaux says her family also likes the cake without the topping.

# Homemade wreaths

The Christmas season has traditionally been one of the favorite times of the year in America but in recent years it has also become one of the most costly.

Seasonal costs often can be reduced by resorting to handcrafts, both for holiday decorations and for gifts.

If your gift list is already complete, but you're interested in finding just the right yuletide touch to greet guests to your home, you might consider creating one of the three wreaths

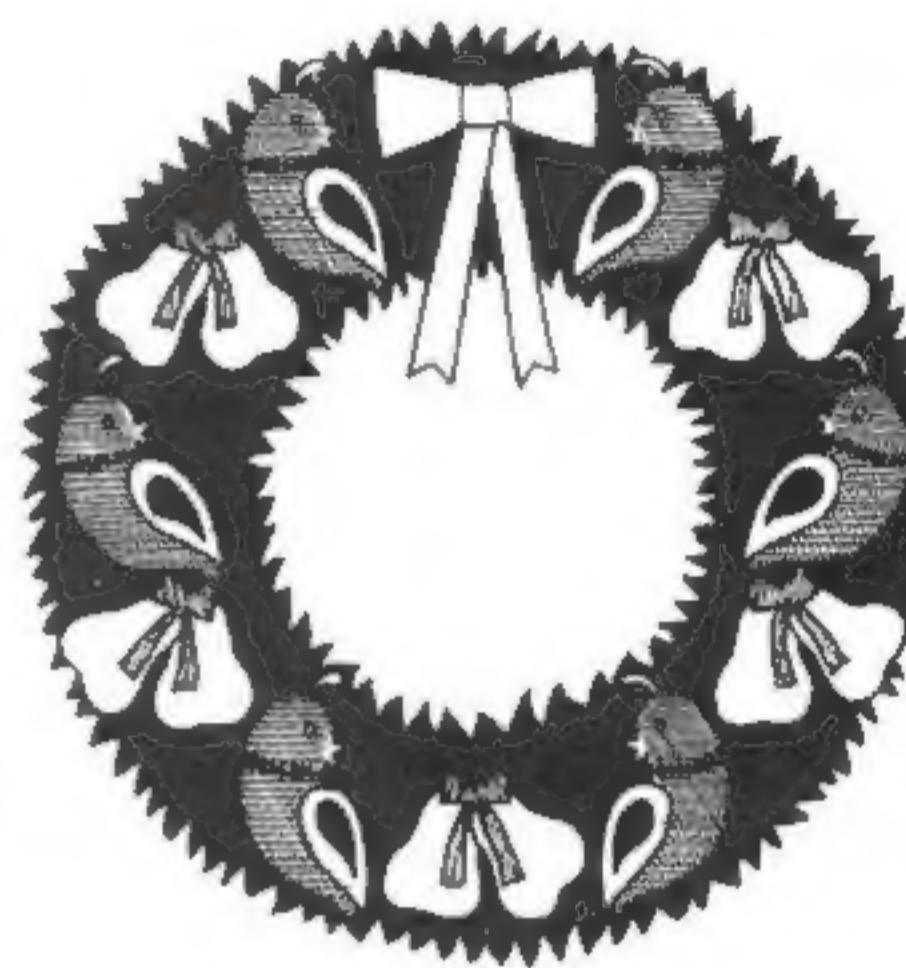
described below.

Each is made of inexpensive, easy-to-find items that you may already have on hand. Only one requires a sewing machine, but the seamstress only needs to know how to sew a straight seam.

Whether you select the braided calico wreath, the yarn wreath or the felt partridge and pear wreath, you will find that it will serve as an inexpensive way to extend warm holiday greetings to your family and friends.

## Felt Partridge and Pear Wreath

*Equipment:* Pencil, ruler, scissors, tracing paper, dressmaker's tracing paper,

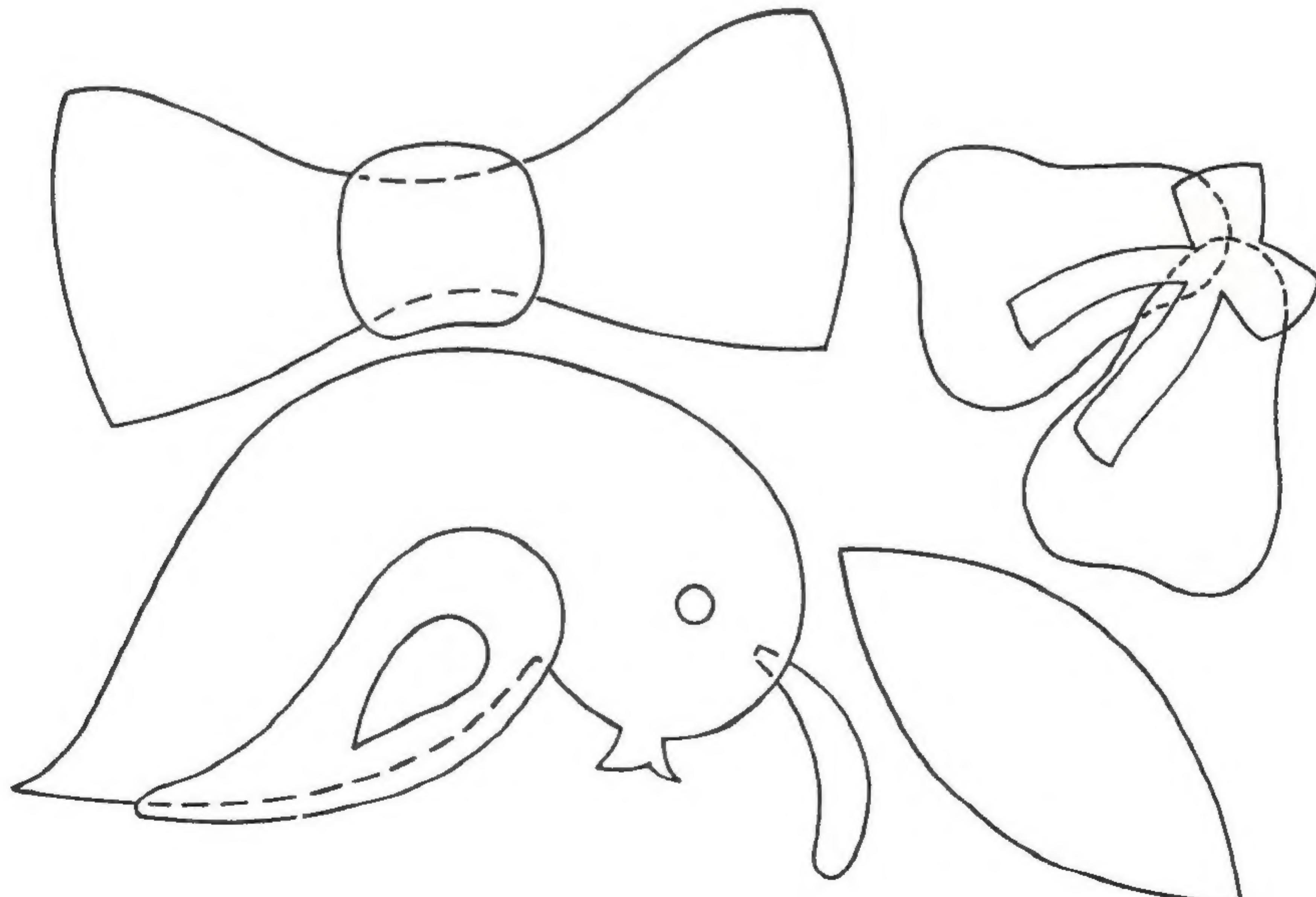


dry ball-point pen, newspaper and glue.

*Materials:* one-half yard of green felt (72 inches wide), 12-inch square of yellow felt and 12-inch square of green felt, 2½-inch thick styrofoam ring (16 inches in diameter), 3M Scotch Craft Mount Adhesive, pipe cleaner.

### Directions:

- Trace actual size patterns. Using dressmaker's carbon, trace leaves, pears, bows and partridges onto felt.



Cut one large yellow bow, 105 green leaves, six red partridges with white eyes, wing, head feather and small green wing, 10 yellow pears and five small red bows. Cut two  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wide strips of felt to fit along inner and outer edges of styrofoam ring.

- Spread newspaper on area where you will be using spray adhesive. Spray felt strips; place around edges of styrofoam ring. Spray leaves with adhesive and glue onto front of styrofoam ring, overlapping leaves; point tips of some leaves toward center, others toward outside edges. Assemble partridges, pears, bows and glue in place with spray adhesive on top of leaves, as shown in the illustration.
- Make pipe cleaner loop; insert back of styrofoam for hanging.

#### Braided Wreath

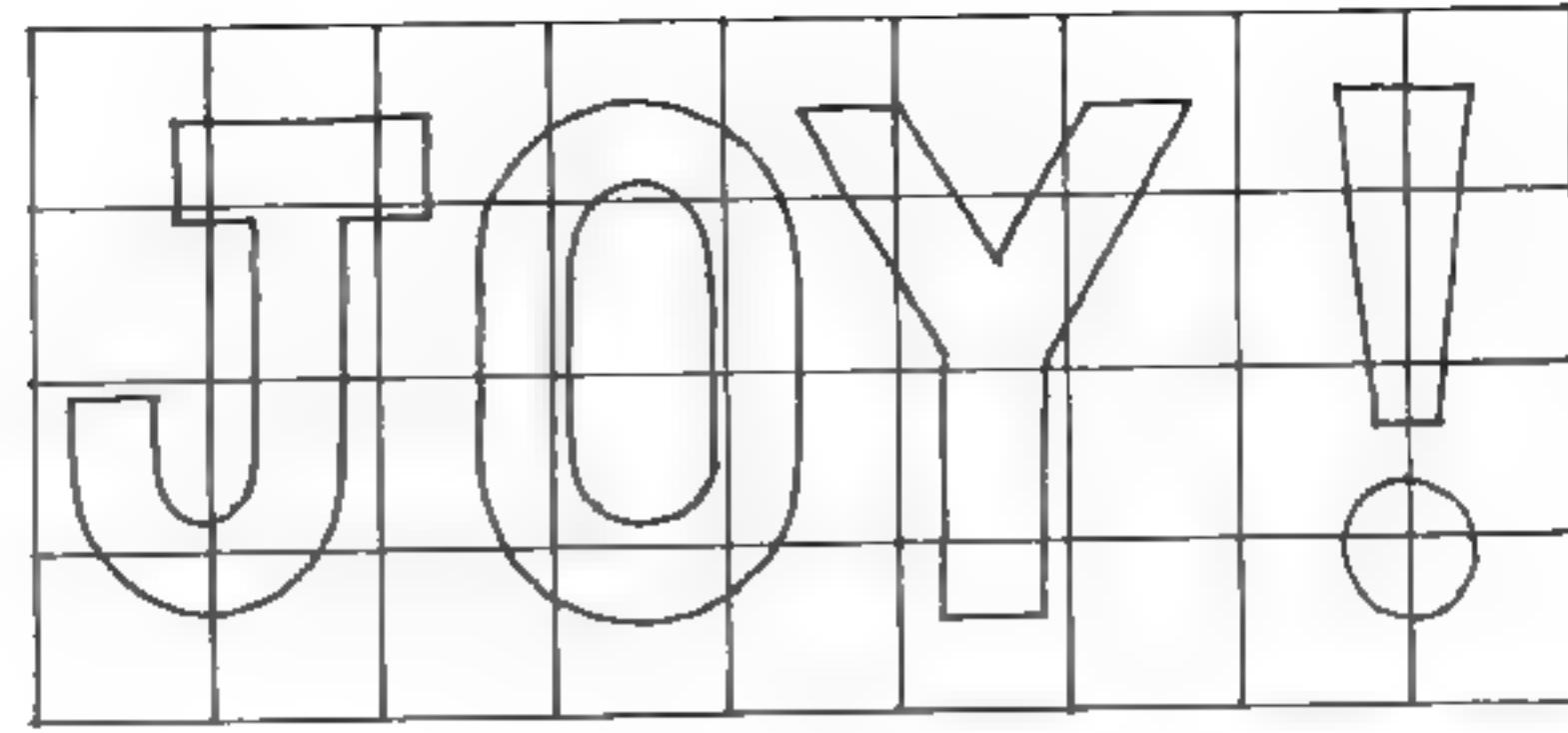
*Equipment:* Sewing machine, scissors, yardstick, needle.



*Materials:* Strong thread, three different fabrics — 45 inches wide and 6 inches long — 16 ounces of polyfill, craft ribbon or fabric bow and a small plastic ring for hanging.

#### Directions

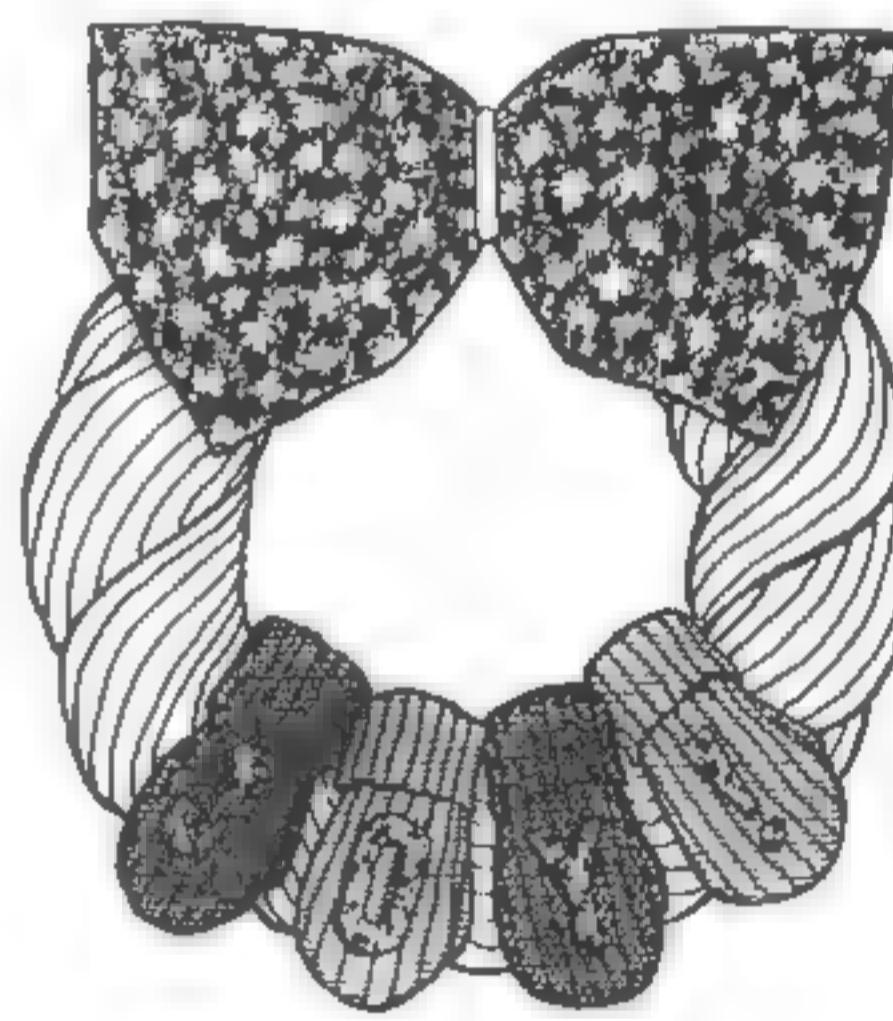
- Cut three strips of fabric six inches long, the width of the fabric.
- With right sides together, sew a one-half inch seam. You now have a 45-inch tube.
- Using a yardstick, turn about one inch of the tube over the end of the stick and slowly pull the tube down over the stick, right side out.
- With the aid of the yardstick, stuff small amounts of the polyfill at a time into the tube from both ends. Stuff firmly, but more importantly, evenly.
- When the three tubes are stuffed, stitch over all three tubes at one end.
- Braid the tubes tightly, gently curving the tubes into a "U" shape as you braid. This forms a more lasting wreath with less strain on your seams.
- Complete the circle, stitch ends securely, overlapping the beginning of the braid if necessary. The stitches need not be neat since the bow will cover them.
- Attach a small ring for hanging the wreath, then tie the bow around the top of the wreath.



#### Yarn Wreath

*Materials:* 12-inch diameter wire frame or Styrofoam ring; six 70-yard skeins Aunt Lydia's green Heavy Rug Yarn; four mittens; one-half yard red calico for bow; scraps assorted calico prints for letters; rubber bands; one-half yard of one-fourth-inch red grosgrain ribbon.

- Cut red calico 15 inches by 36 inches. With wrong side in, fold in half the matching 36-inch edges.
- Stitch one-half inch seam on long edge. Turn right side out, press. Fold ends to form loops, sew to hold in place. Wind red ribbon around center of bow, then tie to wreath over ends of braid. Enlarge and trace letters, as pictured above. Remember, one square is equal to one inch. Cut off calico.
- Applique to mittens. Pin mittens along base of wreath.



#### Directions:

- Cut two skeins yarn into 50-inch lengths. Wind a rubber band around each end or bundle of strands. Repeat to make two more bundles. Tie the three bundles together at one end.
- Braid the three bundles together and tie ends together with a strand of yarn. Attach braid to ring by lacing yarn around ring and through some strands at back of braid.

# SERVICE AWARDS

**30**  
Years



**Carol Foreman**  
Electric T&D  
Lake Charles



**Joe West**  
Electric T&D  
Beaumont

**20**  
Years



**Leo B. Adams**  
Electric T&D  
Conroe



**Conrad A. Kincaid**  
Electric T&D  
Beaumont



**Laurence Waco Wade**  
Electric T&D  
Port Arthur



**Leslie D. Ogden**  
Executive Dept.  
Beaumont



**Cleo S. Tolley**  
Consumer Services  
Beaumont

# Beverly Ward juggles family life, theological studies

by Ilene Harral

Studying to be a minister takes a lot of stamina. If you don't believe it, ask Beverly Ward: she is now past the halfway mark toward her goal of earning a master's of theology. In fact, you could ask her husband, Jim Ward, GSU's manager of corporate planning. Beverly's quest for the ministry requires a strong commitment from both of them.

Every Sunday afternoon, Jim fires up the family automobile, and he and Beverly head for the Jefferson County Airport. There, she catches a commuter flight to Dallas for three days of classes, knowing that when she arrives in Houston on Wednesday evening, Jim will be at the airport to pick her up and drive back to Beaumont.

Her weekly trips to Dallas' Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University were easier and cheaper before Southwest Airlines left Jefferson County.

"They (Southwest) were my big ticket to school," Beverly recalls. "I wouldn't have started commuting if they had not been here."

Nevertheless, she did start. And now she keeps a car in Dallas at a longtime family friend's home where she stays each week. "That is one of the nicest things about this for me. I go from one home situation to another," she says.

Beverly also works part-time as director of pastoral care at Beaumont's First United Methodist Church. "I have the best of both worlds, getting job experience while I'm in school," she says with enthusiasm. She shops, cooks and freezes family meals on Saturdays and performs assorted household chores whenever she has time.

While she is in Dallas, Jim, 16-year-old son James and daughter Jerri, 14, heat up what Beverly



Beverly Ward and daughter Jerri cook lasagna.

laughingly terms her frozen "gourmet meat loaf, spaghetti and lasagna."

Her schedule sounds staggering, and one would expect Beverly Ward to at least look tired. But, no, her vitality bubbles over contagiously. "It's a lot of fun," the attractive redhead says sincerely, "but you do have to keep a good sense of humor.

"My favorite quotation right now," she adds with a glint in her eyes, "is 'It's not hard to suffer in silence as long as everyone knows what you're doing.' So, I tell people that and then sit back quietly." She throws back her head and laughs uproariously at her own joke.

For her, the idea of becoming a minister slowly germinated over the years. "I've had it in the back of my mind since my late teens," Beverly relates.

Jim was in the Air Force for 20 years, and she found it "hard, if not impossible, to consider going to seminary school" during that time. "We've always been very active in church though," she says. "We even met in a Sunday school class, and our first date was to go to church."

When Jim left the service, he returned to school for an MBA

while she worked. While he was completing his master's degree at the University of Texas, Beverly began attending Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Following their move to Beaumont, in 1978, she commuted for one semester to the University of Saint Thomas in Houston before switching to SMU.

Jim totally supports his wife in her efforts. "She helped me go to school after the Air Force, so it's not unrealistic for me to help her now," he says candidly. "I think it is a good thing when anyone finds something he or she wants to do and then does it."

Following two more semesters of seminary classes and a seven-month internship, which she hopes will be in Beaumont, Beverly plans to graduate in May 1982. What the future may hold, when she is a full-fledged minister, does not really worry the Wards. "I'll more than likely seek an associate position, which gives me more flexibility," she says.

At some point she will be eligible for her own church. "I haven't seen that as a problem," Jim says confidently. "We take things as they come and work them out."



## Lafayette employee reports big catch

Tom Arabie, line foreman in Lafayette, and his brother, Lee, caught 80 drum and red fish during a recent fishing expedition, reports *Plain Talks*. Correspondent Helen Kennedy.

The brothers refused to disclose where they made the catch.

Tom is shown at left and Lee at right.



## Good attendance marks employee's GSU career

Neither rain, nor sleet nor snow — nor illness nor accident — have managed to make Isaac "Ike" Jefferson miss a day of work during the 26 years he has worked for GSU's Baton Rouge Division.

According to Floyd E. Doughty, general substation foreman at the substation shop where Jefferson is employed, Jefferson joined the

company in August, 1954. He attained his good attendance record while remaining involved in activities outside GSU. Jefferson serves as associate minister of the Calvary Assembly Church of Baton Rouge and for several years has served as chaplain for radio station WXOK's Koralaires, a group which presents a Sunday program for the sick and shut-in.

Jefferson also reportedly performs "Ray Charles-type" songs at substation parties and other company get-togethers.

## Port Arthur man receives music degree from Lamar University

Vernon Keith McGee, son of Mr. and Mrs. V.V. McGee of Port Arthur, received his bachelor of science degree in music from Lamar University on May 10.

His father is retired from Gulf States' old appliance repair department.

Young McGee plans to enroll in Southwestern Theological Seminary in Fort Worth for post-graduate studies.

He was married on June 21 to the former Melanie Kim O'Brien of Beaumont.

## Relayman boasts new baby son



Lanard Meche, relayman-1st class in Lafayette, has a new baby son, Quinn Michael Meche. The 8-pound, 6-ounce boy was born to Meche's wife Bernella, on September 27.

## Retirees tour River Bend site in October

About 300 GSU retirees from the Beaumont, Port Arthur, Lake Charles and Baton Rouge divisions toured River Bend October 30th, participating in a one-day outing that included a jambalaya lunch in a St. Francisville park and a tour of Oakley Plantation.



The event was organized by Jim Turner, assistant to the vice president of Public Affairs.

Lake Charles Division Vice President W. E. Richard, who participated in the tour, later commented, "Without exception, each retiree has thanked me for the trip and expressed appreciation for the company's interest in the retired employees."

Several wrote letters of appreciation to Board Chairman Don Crawford.



Chefs for the Cajun-style picnic were Calvin Comeaux and Mickey Dispenza, both of Choctaw service center. They're pictured with a big pot of chicken and sausage jambalaya.

## Retiree fishes in Colorado

L. A. Sullivan Jr., a Lake Charles retiree, is shown with the rainbow trout and Coho salmon he caught in Colorado's Santa Maria Lake recently.

Sullivan says he also caught some brown trout and brook trout while fishing in a private creek on a ranch.

He caught the salmon while fishing with his stepson, Bob Heinball, in the lake, which is an old crater.



## Two new retirees given party

A double retirement party on October 3 honored two Lafayette men, reports *Plain Talks* Correspondent Helen Kennedy.



Honored were Murphy Guidry (shown with his wife), district dispatcher, and Paul Dugas (shown on right in picture with Lafayette employee Bob Domingue), utility foreman.

## Aiena family announces birth

When Cindy and Leon Aiena Jr. announced the birth of their new daughter, Kristy Lynn, they sent cards that portrayed the youngster as a little lineman.

Aiena is with the company's Line Department in Vidor.

The cover of the announcement proclaimed, "Announcing a new power at our house," while the inside described the July 11 arrival as weighing 7 volts (pounds) and 7½ amps (ounces).

## Employees don costumes on Halloween

Devils, dolls, gypsies, cowboys and clowns were just a few of the characters who showed up at Gulf States' main office building the morning of October 31.

*Plain Talks* Correspondent Joe Russian's camera caught a few of the costumed employees that Halloween morning.



In Plant Accounting, those donning disguises were (standing, left to right) Beth Harrington, Steve Waters, Donnie Waldo, Stephanie Fontenot, Saundra Manuel, Shelia Richards and Robyn Sheffield. The clown (kneeling) is Liz Lovett.



In Customer Accounts, Carolyn Watson resembled Raggedy Andy as she went about her day's work. Others in that area wearing costumes were Ivan Dorsey, Sheryln Brown, Cindy Vick, Karen Theriot, Charmayne Pierce, Charlotte Bass and Marsha Cozad.

# ON THE MOVE

**Steptoe, Glenda F.**, Beaumont, to storeroom foreman, T&D Storeroom.

**Stokes, Isaac G.**, Baton Rouge, to administrative assistant, Baton Rouge Division Operations.

**Strachan, Heath S.**, Port Arthur, to engineering helper, Elec. T&D Dept.

**Surgeon, Claude R.**, Baton Rouge, to garage mechanic-1st class, Elec. T&D Dept.

**Summers, Timothy L.**, Beaumont, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D Dept.

**Swinney, Frank S.**, Conroe, to garage mechanic helper, Elec. T&D Dept.

**Thibodeaux, Irby J.**, Beaumont, to painter-Building and Grounds, Building Services.

**Thompson, Twalah B.**, Beaumont, to secretary-executive, Production & Power Supply

**Trieck, Douglas P.**, Beaumont, to senior accountant, Accounting Services.

**Trove, David G.**, Port Arthur, to lineman-2nd class, Elec. T&D Dept.

**Von Colln, William T.**, Baton Rouge, to communications serviceman-2nd class, Elec. T&D Dept.

**Warner, Alden R.**, Baton Rouge, to senior meter reader, Division Accounting

**Warner, Larry D.**, Port Arthur, to repairman-3rd class, Plant Production

**Watkins, James D.**, Willow Glen, to general superintendent-Willow Glen Station, Plant Production

**Watson, Rebecca R.**, Lake Charles, to supervisor-consumer information services, Consumer Services.

**Webb, Kenneth T.**, Beaumont, to manager-computer business systems, Computer Applications.

**Weir, Terry L.**, Beaumont, to accountant to Neches Station, Plant Production.

**Welch, Edward G.**, Beaumont, to supervisor-telecommunications engineering, Engineering Design.

**Westman, Pansy G.**, Beaumont, to senior engineering assistant, Engineering Design.

**Williams, Andrew**, Port Arthur, to master repairman, Plant Production.

**Wiseman, Bernard W.**, Beaumont, to materials project leader, System Production.

**Woodall, Carl D.**, Beaumont, to draftsman Engineering Design.

**Woodall, Larry W.**, Beaumont, to senior engineering assistant, Engineering Design.

**Wycoff, Everett L.**, Beaumont, to apprentice-T&D Dept.

**Zorn, Theodore E.**, Beaumont, to senior training & development representative, Human Resources.

**Adams, John M.**, New Caney, to district service representative, Division Consumer Services.

**Allen, Wayne L.**, New Caney, to service foreman, T&D Service.

**Allison, Theda G.**, Lake Charles, to senior clerk, Division Accounting/Credit & Collections.

**Armstead, Gloria B.**, Baton Rouge, to clerk-merit roll, Division Accounting/Customer Accounts.

**Barnes, Paul D.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D Line.

**Barnett, Michael W.**, Beaumont, to utility worker II, Plant Production/Utility Crews.

**Batiste, Stanley**, Lafayette, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D Line.

**Bell, Jim W.**, Baton Rouge, to storeroom foreman, T&D Storeroom.

**Bergeron, Hugh R.**, Baton Rouge, to pipefitter-welder-2nd class, Gas Dept./Construction.

**Block, Ronald A., Jr.**, Beaumont, to apprentice-T&D Dept., Elec. T&D/Line.

**Boyce, Richard B.**, Baton Rouge, to apprentice-T&D Dept., Elec. T&D/Line.

**Boyd, David M.**, Louisiana Station, to test technician-2nd class, Plant Production.

**Breaux, Dwayne M.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Brown, Bobby R.**, Beaumont, to apprentice-T&D Dept., Elec. T&D/Line.

**Buhler, Vickie T.**, Louisiana Station, to general departmental clerk, Plant Production/Engineering & Clerical.

**Burdette, Bobby J., Jr.**, Zachary, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Bush, Clarence E., Jr.**, Louisiana Station, to turbine-water plant operator, Plant Production.

**Bushnell, Raymus D.**, Lake Charles, to mechanic helper, Plant Production.

**Chapman, Stephen W.**, Denham Springs, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D Line.

**Clayton, Cynthia D.**, Beaumont to expediter, Materials Management.

**Coleman, Danny V.**, Sulphur, to lineman-1st class, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Crile, Larry R.**, Vidor, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Davis, Donny G.**, Denham Springs, to helper-T&D Dept.

**Davis, Leonard B.**, Beaumont, to manager-exploration, Varibus Operations.

**Delahoussaye, Joseph J.**, Beaumont, to director-joint ownership accounting, Power Interconnections.

**Dodson, Robert J., Jr.**, Conroe, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production.

**Dowies, Robert W.**, Beaumont, to director-EDP implementation services, Computer Applications.

**DuBose, Buster J.**, New Caney, to line foreman, T&D Line.

**Elkins, Eddie W.**, Port Arthur, to meter reader, Division Accounting/Customer Accounts.

**England, Rebecca L.**, Beaumont, to stenographer-senior, Fuel Services.

**Fruge, Richard W.**, formerly of Baton Rouge, to engineer, Beaumont Engineering Design.

**Fugitt, James A.**, formerly of Willow Glen, to electrical PMS coordinator, System Production, Nelson Coal Plant.

**Gammage, Frank W.**, Beaumont, to apprentice-T&D Dept., Elec. T&D/Line.

**Garon, Gerald W.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Gilford, Otis**, Conroe, to substation mechanic-1st class, Elec. T&D/Substation.

**Girdler, Juanita C.**, Beaumont, to confidential records clerk, Computer Applications.

**Goldsmith, Carol B.**, Beaumont, to engineering assistant, Engineering Design.

**Goodwin, Gerald D.**, Port Arthur, to repairman-2nd class, Plant Production.

**Griffith, Rodney W.**, Beaumont, to engineer, Engineering Design.

**Harrington, Ralph E., Jr.**, Beaumont, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Hatcher, Clarence R.**, Huntsville, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Hayden, Stephen D.**, Baton Rouge, to apprentice-T&D Dept., Elec. T&D/Line.

**Heath, Joseph A.**, Willow Glen, to electrician-1st class, Plant Production.

**Hegwood, Raymond L.**, Beaumont, to apprentice-T&D, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Hernandez, Oray**, formerly of Abbeville, to inspector-contract crews, Lafayette T&D Line.

**Hollier, Michael C.**, Port Arthur, to relayman-1st class, Elec. T&D/Relay

**Jakes, Bonita H.**, Beaumont, to personnel records clerk, Human Resources.

**Jasper, John T.**, Willow Glen, to supervisor-planning & administration, Plant Production.

**Kador, Christopher C.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-1st class, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Kennedy, Helen R.**, Lafayette, to stenographer-executive, Division Operations.

**LeBlanc, Corbett A.**, Lafayette, to storeroom foreman, T&D Storeroom.

**Lee, Mark B.**, Denham Springs, to apprentice-T&D Dept., Elec. T&D/Line.

**Leger, Nelson M.**, Port Arthur, to serviceman-1st class, Elec. T&D/Service.

**Major, William R.**, Baton Rouge, to meterman-1st class, Gas Dept./Meter.

**Malik, Iftikhar M.**, formerly of Beaumont, to quality engineering representative, River Bend Nuclear Group, River Bend Site.

**McKnight, Kenneth C.**, Baton Rouge, to section head, T&D Engineering.

**Miller, Willie E.**, Jennings, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Mims, Paul S.**, Navasota, to apprentice-T&D Dept., Elec. T&D/Line.

**Mitchell, Daniel R.**, Woodville, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Moore, Larry G.**, Jennings, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Morley, Karen L.**, Huntsville, to senior clerk, Division Accounting.

**Motl, Carolyn H.**, Beaumont, to stenographer-executive, Corporate Planning.

**Murray, David T.**, formerly of Lewis Creek, to engineer, System Production.

**Page, Johnny L.**, Beaumont, to substation mechanic-1st class, Elec. T&D/Substation.

**Patino, Alan A.**, Port Arthur, to lineman-2nd class, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Pelichet, Torris J., Jr.**, Baton Rouge, to substation mechanic-4th class, Elec. T&D/Substation.

**Pharr, Milton H.**, Nelson Station, to mechanical maintenance foreman, Plant Production.

**Placker, Dennis R.**, Dayton, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D/Line.

**Robbins, Marlene S.**, Beaumont, to section head, Computer Applications.

**Rollins, Ronald M.**, Beaumont, to engineer, Engineering Design.

**Ross, Daniel C.**, formerly of Beaumont, to control operating foreman, River Bend Nuclear Group, River Bend Site.

**Roy, Philip Jr.**, Beaumont, to building & grounds maintenance man, Elec. T&D Dept.

**Ryals, David W.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D Line

**Sattler, Florabelle B.**, Beaumont, to data analyst, Computer Applications.

**Saurage, Wilma W.**, Beaumont, to division substation operator, Elec. T&D Service.

**Schwenneker, Bonnie C.**, Lake Charles, to general departmental clerk, Elec. T&D Service.

**Seymour, David G.**, formerly of Beaumont, to personnel administrator, Human Resources, River Bend Site.

**Shepard, Gregory K.**, formerly of Baton Rouge, to project coordinator-residential conservation services, Beaumont System Consumer Services.

**Sparks, Sidney J., Jr.**, Baton Rouge, to collector, Division Accounting

**Spivey, John W.**, Beaumont, to engineer, Transmission Planning.

**Sprinkle, Nathan C.**, formerly of Sabine Station, to staff analyst, Beaumont Power Plant Engineering and Design.

**Stelly, Joseph L.**, Lafayette, to utility foreman, T&D Line.

**Stuart, Lloyd K.**, New Caney, to lineman-1st class, Elec. T&D Line.

**Terry, Eugene J.**, Jennings, to utility worker II, T&D Helper Crews.

**Thau, Robert W.**, Lake Charles, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production.

**Toussaint, Keith B.**, Baton Rouge, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D Line.

**Walton, Carroll W.**, Silsbee, to district service representative, Division Consumer Services.

**Weidner, Michael F.**, formerly of Nelson Coal Site, to purchasing agent, Beaumont Materials Management.

**Wise, Harrell G.**, Beaumont, to supervisor-fuels management, Beaumont Power Supply.

# Meet your correspondent: D.W. Rutherford of Lewis Creek

D. W. Rutherford is almost a study in perpetual motion.

The combination *Plain Talks* correspondent/CONTACT leader doesn't know how to slow down.

A 10-year Gulf States' veteran, Rutherford is a master instrument technician at Lewis Creek Station near Willis, Tex. He also serves as a job steward for IBEW Local Union No. 2286.

The blond, muscular employee is involved in many activities outside work, too, including building a two-story home for his family.

"I just wanted a small, one-story house, but my 'other half' (the former Debra Bishop of Splendora, Tex.) decided it was going to be two stories and she won out," he says.



The couple has two young sons, John J., 7, and Dustin A., 4.

Rutherford coaches softball and baseball teams during the season, including his wife's softball team. In 1979, Rutherford, who has officiated for basketball games for the past eight years, organized a basketball association in Montgomery County. He taught 15 charter members, including his wife, how to officiate. Members of the organization now call all the junior high, freshman and sub-varsity games for the Conroe Independent School District.

## Company offers financing

Several beneficial changes have been made in the employee and retiree merchandise purchase plan, as GSUers learned in late September when they received information packets concerning the company benefit.

While most eligible employees — those with at least one year of service — seem to be familiar with the appliance purchase plan, they may not be quite so familiar with other aspects of the plan, says Jo Ann Smith, manager-consumer information.

In addition to the major appliance schedule, which permits employees and retirees to pay for certain electrical appliances through payroll deduction and at no interest charge, the merchandise plan also permits company financing — again at no interest charge — for comfort-conditioning equipment and energy-efficient items for a home.

For the first time, mobile homes are eligible for financing of weatherizing or comfort-conditioning equipment.

Among recent revisions of the merchandise purchase plan was the doubling of the company's contribution toward the cost of

building or buying a new National Energy Watch (NEW) home from \$200 to \$400.

And, since October, plan participants have been receiving monthly statements with a breakdown of deductions and the balance for purchases made under the plan.

Mrs. Smith emphasizes that this article only highlights the plan and urges those who wish to find out more about its provisions to review their information packets or call a division consumer service representative for more details.

Some of the provisions include:

- **Comfort-conditioning:**

A division consumer service representative will provide names of authorized dealers and explain NEW certification standards, then coordinate the job with the dealer or licensed electrical contractor. The representative also follows up with an inspection of the structure. Company contributions to help offset costs are limited to one for each five-year period.

- **Newly-constructed homes:**

When an employee builds or buys a newly-constructed home that

meets NEW standards and is comfort-conditioned with an electric heat pump with an energy efficiency ratio (EER) of 7 or higher or cooling with an EER of 9 or higher (for a conventional system) the company will contribute \$400 to help offset the extra cost of the energy-efficient items. The company will also finance the cost of the equipment, insulation and certain energy-efficient items.

- **Retrofitting and remodeling existing homes:** When an employee replaces a comfort-conditioning system, the company will contribute up to \$400 for the necessary wiring only and will finance for up to five years the cost of the equipment, materials and labor related to its installation.

- **Energy-efficient items:**

When an employee installs energy-efficient items, including such items as insulation, storm windows and attic ventilation, in his home to certify it to NEW standards, the company will finance from \$100 at no interest charge and with up to 36 months to pay. Again, certain standards must be met for eligibility.

## Broadcasters conclude unusual energy series

An unusually ambitious project for a local television news team was concluded in October by WJKW-Television in Cleveland, the flagship station for the Storer Broadcasting Co., reports the Atomic Industrial Forum.

On consecutive weekdays, from Sept. 15 through Oct. 10, viewers in seven cities served by Storer stations followed a four-man WJKW-TV crew across the globe — to the United Kingdom, France and Japan.

The 20-part series, entitled "The Search for Power — Planet Earth," explored progress in nuclear development, innovative oil-drilling techniques and advances in coal production.

The series included visits to a wide variety of nuclear and other energy facilities, plus interviews with government and industry spokesmen, critics and civic leaders. The segments were transmitted via satellite to the company's television stations in Cleveland, Boston, Atlanta, Toledo, Detroit, Milwaukee and San Diego.

The recent acquisition of earth receiving "dishes" at those seven stations was the catalyst for the series. It sparked the company to undertake a project that could utilize the new tool, said Virgil Dominic, news director for WJKW-TV and the producer/director/correspondent for the series. The subject matter — nuclear energy in particular — was selected because it "is obviously a great controversial issue in all parts of the U.S. and, therefore, would apply locally in all of our markets," he said.

"Everywhere we went, people were amazed that a local broadcaster was undertaking a project of this scope," Dominic revealed.

Dominic's "overwhelming impression" after concluding the series was the "contrast in

philosophy" in the three countries of Britain, France and Japan, compared to the U.S.

"The ingredient they all share is absolute dedication to nuclear power as official government policy," he said. "Because of this commitment, nuclear power is not as subject to delay as in the U.S."

## Mortgage lenders consider energy

A nationwide survey of mortgage lenders has found that a majority now take energy considerations into account in reviewing home loan applications. In a recent Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation study, 59 percent of the lending institutions surveyed said they consider energy costs in their loan approval process.

Nearly 68 percent have told their appraisers to consider energy efficiency in determining the appraised value of a home.

In releasing the results of the survey, the Mortgage Corporation urged all lenders "to increase their awareness of energy efficiency in lending." The study found that few lenders actively promote or lend money for energy-related home improvements.

Fewer than one-third of the respondents offer financing for energy-upgrading of properties and only 10 percent offer preferential loan considerations on homes with solar energy systems or similar energy conserving items.

## Association seeks tax incentives for apartments

The Building Owners and Managers Association's Apartment Council has noted that no legislation has been passed since 1973 granting conservation tax incentives to apartment owners.

The council warns that the rental business could end unless apartment complexes can reduce their energy costs. The council suggests individual metering or submetering.

(A Department of Energy study of metering practices shows that metered tenants reduce energy use an average of 22 percent and up to as much as 35 percent.)

Most new apartment complexes contain individual meters, reports *Energy User News*.

## High schoolers favor nuclear, survey shows

By almost a five-to-three margin, America's high school students think that additional nuclear plants should be allowed to be built.

These were the findings of a survey of 2,500 high schoolers conducted by *U.S. News & World Report*. The students attended schools that participate in the magazine's education program on current events.

Asked if the building of more nuclear plants should be prohibited, 47.6 percent disagreed, 32.7 percent agreed and 19.6 percent said they weren't sure.

When asked which is the greater national priority, the economy or the environment, almost two-thirds of the teenagers said the economy.

Results of the poll were given in the September 29 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*.

# Centenarian, son exhibit vitality

— by Susan Gilley

For V. L. and J. V. Lasyon, there is a smoothness to life that neither time nor tragedy seems to ruffle.

That is not to say the father-and-son pair is unaffected by events; rather, the two — who have lived a combined total of 166 years — have maintained their tempo despite them.

V. L., the father, celebrated his 100th birthday on November 14 and observed the occasion the day before by visiting Neches Station, a power plant that he helped build during the 1920s.

His tour was conducted by his 66-year-old son, who continues to work as a shift supervisor at the plant 43 years after hiring on as a helper.

In the office of Superintendent Jimmie Smith, the Lasyons studied photographs of the plant from the construction period.

V. L., who was a construction employee of Stone & Webster's Eastern Texas Electric Co., mused, "It's been 54 years — there's been a lot of changes. I never had any idea that they'd build this size of a plant."

Upon its completion in August, 1926, Neches was a \$2 million power plant with one unit that produced 15,000 kilowatts of electricity. At the time, it was believed to be capable of eventually accommodating units that would produce up to 300,000 kilowatts.

By today's standards, however, the 427,000-kilowatt Neches is a small power plant.

The younger Lasyon noted that the 63-acre Neches River site was plagued by frequent high waters during the 1925-26 construction period. Nevertheless, the site was chosen because of its proximity to the river — then much narrower, V. L. Lasyon said — and the ready availability of water for condensing steam and for transporting supplies of oil and natural gas.

Once he finished working on Neches Station, V. L. Lasyon



V. L. and J. V. Lasyon  
at Neches

helped string highline wire between Beaumont and Dayton.

The elder Lasyon's electric company career ended with the Depression. After that, he made his living as a carpenter.

J. V. Lasyon, who joined GSU in 1937 at Neches Station, has now worked nearly two years past what used to be the mandatory retirement age.

Smith said he suspected that Lasyon was reluctant to retire even before he turned 65. Although nothing is official, Lasyon has indicated that he may retire next spring, shortly after turning 67 on March 14.

A native of Grant Parish, Louisiana, V. L. Lasyon moved to Orange during World War I and worked in the shipyard from 1916 until 1918. He signed up with the U.S. Army just three weeks before the Armistice was signed.

V. L. revealed that he has lived alone a little more than six years since his wife died.

But V. L. has not simply whiled

away time since her death. He continues to live in their Beaumont home and cook his own meals every day except Sunday, when he regularly worships at Sabine Tabernacle, the church he has belonged to for the past 54 years. He also walks several blocks to downtown Beaumont to personally pay his electric and telephone bills.

"I've been batchin' it since my wife died in 1974," he explained simply, without a trace of self-pity.

J. V. and his wife, Mildred, make their home in Nederland. They have one grown daughter, V. L.'s only grandchild.

J. V., whose own trim, youthful appearance belies his 66 years, theorized why his father has led such a rich, full life.

"He worked hard all his life until he retired."

He didn't say it, but he might have — V. L. may have set the pace, but J. V. seems to have picked it up.

## PLAIN TALKS

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# A holiday message from Board Chairman Don Crawford...

Although Gulf States Utilities was incorporated over 55 years ago, the company might still be considered in its adolescence — poised, as it is, on the brink of great changes in the areas of nuclear and coal generation of electricity. Developments in those areas represent just two of the many challenges that face GSU'S 4,300 employees at the end of 1980.

Gulf States' most important resource is the energy of its employees — their creative capabilities, their ideas and their refusal to be overwhelmed by events.

The holiday season has traditionally been a time for renewing ties with friends and families and for assessing our accomplishments of the past year. As a member of the GSU family, I want to thank you for your achievements on the company's behalf. I believe that the opportunities for the company's future — an optimistic future — can be attributed to the dedication and hard work of all Gulf Staters.

Best wishes for a happy holiday season!



*W. Donham Crawford*

W. Donham Crawford  
Chairman of the Board and  
Chief Executive Officer



## Crawford to accept questions from employees

Any employee with a question for Don Crawford should complete this form and send it to him on the 19th floor in the main office building in Beaumont.

Questions may be anonymous, but names and work locations must be included if personal replies are desired.

Questions and answers of general interest will be published in *Plain Talks*

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Name

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Location